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23 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
24 FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
25 SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION

26 AMERICAN FEDERATION OF  
27 GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO, et  
28 al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

DONALD J. TRUMP, in his official capacity  
as President of the United States, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 3:25-cv-03698-SI

**DECLARATION OF ERIK MOLVAR**

**DECLARATION OF ERIK MOLVAR**

I, Erik Molvar, affirm:

1. I am the Executive Director of the Western Watersheds Project. I have been the Executive Director since October 2016. I am a wildlife biologist with published research in the behavior, ecology, and population dynamics of Alaskan moose as well as large-scale conservation planning. I am also the author of 16 hiking guidebooks and backpacking techniques manuals for national parks and wilderness areas spanning the West from Alaska to Arizona. I am also a member of Western Watersheds Project and have been a member since 2016.
2. I am a former federal employee. I was employed by the U.S. Forest Service on a stream survey crew in the Clearwater National Forest in 1987 to survey habitat for salmon and steelhead. From 1989 to 1998, I was employed seasonally as a biological technician on Operation Fish Run for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers barging juvenile salmon and steelhead down the Snake and Columbia Rivers.
3. Western Watersheds Project (“WWP”) is a non-profit environmental conservation group that works to influence and improve public-lands management throughout the western United States to protect native species and conserve and restore the habitats they depend on. Our primary focus is on the negative impacts of livestock grazing, including harm to ecological, biological, cultural, historic, archeological, scenic resources, wilderness values, roadless areas, Wilderness Study Areas and designated Wilderness.
4. WWP was founded in 1993 and has over 14,000 members and supporters. We cover 250 million acres of public land spanning all of the western states, and we have field offices in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and Oregon. About 2,000 of our members are dues-paying. All of our members rely on WWP to advocate for proper land use and wildlife management as well as to relay information about what is happening

1 inside government agencies with respect to wildlife, livestock grazing, land-use  
2 management, renewable energy, etc.

- 3 5. Our organization often works with and relies on information from several federal  
4 departments and agencies, including the Department of Interior (“DOI”), the United States  
5 Department of Agriculture (“USDA”), the Department of Commerce’s National Oceanic  
6 and Atmospheric Administration (“NOAA”), and the Environmental Protection Agency  
7 (“EPA”). When the federal government carries out “large-scale” Reductions-in-Force  
8 (RIFs) across these agencies, it will terminate over tens of thousands of more federal  
9 employees, potentially shutting down entire programs or offices. These terminations will  
10 severely impede WWP from carrying out its mission to protect and restore native wildlife.

11 **The Proposed Staffing Cuts at the Department of Interior Will Directly Hurt WWP’s Ability**  
12 **to Carry Out its Mission**

- 13 6. DOI has announced that it is implementing sweeping reductions to its administrative and  
14 support function workforce, part of reorganization and consolidation efforts, followed by  
15 widespread and significant RIFs to employees in the offices of its components such as  
16 BLM, FWS, and National Park Service (NPS), according to media reports.<sup>1</sup>
- 17 7. I know these RIFs will have a negative impact on WWP and its members, because of the  
18 many ways that WWP and its members rely on the work of these agencies. I also recently  
19 experienced how, on a smaller scale, the termination of many federal employees with  
20 probationary status in DOI previously damaged Western Watersheds’ ability to accomplish  
21 its mission. The RIFs will be exponentially worse, compounding these problems.

22 <sup>1</sup> Eric Katz, *Interior Department to consolidate functions across the country, leading to widespread layoffs*,  
23 GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE (April 9, 2025), available at: <https://www.govexec.com/management/2025/04/interior-department-consolidate-functions-across-country-leading-widespread-layoffs/404438/>; Scott Streater, *Burgum launches broad Interior reorganization*, E & E NEWS (April 18, 2025), available at:  
24 <https://www.eenews.net/articles/burgum-launches-broad-interior-reorganization/>

- 1 8. For example, our work depends on timely access to public records. Large-scale RIFs will  
2 directly impact our ability to get that access. We know this from recent experience: on  
3 February 20, 2025 a federal employee told me that because of staffing issues related to the  
4 purge of probationary employees, the Bureau of Land Management was unable to respond  
5 to a Freedom of Information Act request submitted by the Western Watersheds Project.
- 6 9. The U.S. Forest Service does not post its Annual Operating Instructions (AOIs) or  
7 Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) governing commercial livestock grazing on  
8 National Forests online for public inspection. On April 21, 2025, WWP staff were  
9 informed that a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for AOIs and AMPs would be  
10 delayed from the 20-business-day standard deadline to one year or more, stating  
11 "Additionally, please not [sic] that with all that is going on in the government this day in  
12 age, the forest service is also down in numbers with regards to manpower." On April 22,  
13 the same official emailed in regard to this FOIA request, stating, "the response time  
14 mentioned in our original email on this request being one plus year was in error.  
15 Realistically, we are actually looking at more like five plus years or more to respond to this  
16 request...." We have never experienced this level of proposed delay to a FOIA request in  
17 the history of the organization. On April 23, we were informed by Forest Service staff that  
18 the agency was "looking at 50% reductions" and were expected to lose a lot of staff on  
19 April 25 due to resignations in the present climate of federal job instability. Our ability to  
20 review Forest Service grazing management documents promptly (especially AOIs which  
21 contain direction for that particular year) is essential to WWP's ability to effectively  
22 monitor and advocate for environmentally sustainable livestock grazing on National Forest  
23 lands.
- 24 10. WWP has a FOIA request in to FWS for peer-reviewed reports on the Gierisch mallow, a  
25 rare plant listed as 'endangered' under the Endangered Species Act, which is affected by

1 livestock grazing. On April 23, we learned that the email for FOIA officer Stacey  
2 Cummins, who had been handling the matter for Utah FWS, had been deactivated. On  
3 April 23, on a call with BLM FOIA staff, we learned that BLM FOIA Coordinators in  
4 Utah, Wyoming, and Montana had left the agency's employ. On April 24, we were told by  
5 a BLM official that Wyoming BLM FOIA Coordinator Detty Crockett, who had been  
6 handling WWP FOIA requests for Land Health Evaluations and information regarding the  
7 Lander wild horse gather, had taken a deferred resignation. On April 24, during phone calls  
8 with FWS employees in Utah, WWP staff was told that the Utah FWS FOIA officer,  
9 Stacey Cummins, had taken a deferred resignation. We were further informed on April 24  
10 by a FWS employee that the Department of Interior was closing all FOIA offices within  
11 individual agencies, and in the future all FOIA responses will be handled at the  
12 Department level as part of consolidation of administrative tasks. This will inevitably lead  
13 to delays in FOIA productions, further harming WWP's ability to advance our conservation  
14 mission, because the public documents being requested are housed in individual agencies,  
15 not at the Department of Interior headquarters.

16 11. When the government began firing probationary employees, range management and  
17 biologist positions were terminated within the Bureau of Land Management ("BLM"). The  
18 BLM is responsible for conducting land-health assessments to monitor the impact of cattle  
19 and sheep grazing on public lands. When land-health assessments reveal failures to meet  
20 land-health standards, the Bureau must take immediate action before the next grazing  
21 season in accordance with federal regulations. Even at full staffing, BLM was having  
22 severe difficulties in conducting land-health assessments in all of the lands that are leased  
23 to commercial livestock operations today. The loss of federal employees in range and  
24 biological positions increased this failure to conduct land-health assessments and,  
25 therefore, the failure to correct ecologically destructive livestock grazing on federal public

1 lands. This impaired WWP's mission. Further terminations, on an even larger scale will  
2 cause even more serious harm to our mission.

3 12. In one specific example of the effect of previous terminations on WWP's work, our  
4 Arizona-New Mexico Director was scheduled to participate in a BLM-sponsored field trip  
5 on February 19-21, 2025, together with BLM staff and other stakeholders to view  
6 Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring ("AIM") plots and begin the land-health evaluation  
7 process. AIM is a comprehensive system of standards for assessing natural resource  
8 conditions and trends on public lands managed by the BLM. The BLM employee who was  
9 supposed to lead this trip was fired on February 14. As a result, the trip participants were  
10 able to visit less than half of the grazing allotments/AIM sites originally planned. This  
11 means that WWP was unable to obtain the information it needed to conduct its  
12 conservation work in the area. We expect that more situations hindering WWP's ability to  
13 research and obtain information related to our conservation efforts will arise as the federal  
14 government initiates further cuts to the BLM.

15 13. Large-scale terminations in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ("FWS") will impact the  
16 agency's ability to categorize and protect endangered species. FWS is responsible for  
17 listing certain species on the Endangered Species Act ("ESA"). Every day that the FWS  
18 delays listing the ESA findings for a species is a day when strong protections will not be in  
19 place against primary threats to the species' existence, including degradation of its habitat.

20 14. For example, FWS terminations threatened the recovery of the Wyoming toad, which has  
21 been listed as endangered under the ESA since 1984. FWS operates a captive-breeding  
22 program, and it is trying to restock lakes in the Laramie Basin with the toad. But the  
23 hatchery that operates FWS' captive-breeding facility is drastically understaffed as a result  
24 of previous terminations, and the impending RIFs will make it more difficult for the  
25

1 agency to restore toad populations. Consequently, members of my organization will lose  
2 the ability to see, interact, study, or enjoy the increasingly rare animal.

3 15. Further terminations at FWS will also affect the survival and protection of the Arctic  
4 grayling, as the agency currently has until February 2027 to complete its ESA findings for  
5 the species. The Arctic grayling's habitat in the Upper Missouri River region is limited to a  
6 few cold-water streams and rivers, primarily in Big Hole and Ruby River watersheds in  
7 southwestern Montana. The species was once more widely distributed. Increased layoffs at  
8 FWS will only further delay the completion of ESA findings for the vulnerable Arctic  
9 grayling.

10 16. I personally visit the Big Hole valley regularly, where I have fished for Arctic grayling in  
11 the lakes of Sapphire Mountains immediately to the west. I've caught these fish in Fuse  
12 Lake in the Sapphire Mountains, and I've also fished for them in Glacier National Park and  
13 in Alaska. I currently have plans to visit the Big Hole Valley on my trip to Alaska this  
14 coming July 2025.

15 17. Knowing that the Arctic grayling exists in the Ruby River and Big Hole River is important  
16 to my peace of mind. If that species were to become extinct in these rivers and streams, my  
17 ability to enjoy that region of Montana would be impaired. I would look across that  
18 landscape and be reminded of failures in efforts of the federal government to preserve this  
19 species, and the failures of my own conservation efforts. Similarly, the loss of this species  
20 would likewise harm other members of my organization.

21 18. On April 17, 2025, WWP was informed that the FWS staff member responsible for the  
22 National Wetlands Inventory database had been fired as a probationary employee. This  
23 database catalogs and presents to the public data on 1.7 million acres of riparian habitats in  
24 sagebrush ecosystems alone, and has 45 million data requests per year from 300,000 users.  
25 WWP's GIS Specialist routinely uses this database for digital mapping, which is essential

1 to WWP's advocacy work. The firing of this single FWS worker decreased the accuracy of  
2 the database, delayed data quality control, and caused tribal cooperators to have reduced  
3 ability to effectively produce data from their lands. The loss or degradation of data on  
4 riparian and wetland habitats undermines WWP's efforts to protect these fragile and  
5 biodiverse areas, which support more than 70% of wildlife in the arid West. Large-scale  
6 cuts will cause exponentially more devastating impacts.

7 19. On April 22, 2025 I learned through news reporting that none of the 573 National Wildlife  
8 Refuges (NWRs), which are managed by the FWS, is currently operating at full capacity  
9 because of previous firings of probationary workers.<sup>2</sup> According to the report, 57% of the  
10 National Wildlife Refuges can only "partially meet goals," 35% "lack sufficient staff and  
11 funding" and "receive little or no maintenance or management," and 8% lack "staff and  
12 funding to achieve any goals" and are considered "shuttered" by the agency as a result of  
13 staffing cuts. Additional "large-scale" cuts will necessarily further devastate the NWRs.

14 20. WWP expends considerable resources to protect and restore native species on NWRs. We  
15 recently litigated livestock impacting sage grouse Priority Habitats on Clear Lake NWR in  
16 California, are currently litigating the legality of livestock grazing on the Red Rock Lakes  
17 NWR in Montana in light of impacts to Arctic grayling, and are advocating to end trespass  
18 livestock grazing in Klamath Marsh NWR in Oregon. When National Wildlife Refuges are  
19 unable to achieve their goals to protect wildlife, WWP's interests are directly harmed.

20 21. In early March, media reported that the Trump administration asked National Park Service  
21 (NPS) managers to cut its payroll by 30 percent, cuts to the 16,000 members of its  
22 permanent workforce.<sup>3</sup>

23 <sup>2</sup> Mike Koshmrl, *Wildlife Refuge System 'at risk' with no units fully resourced amid DOGE*  
24 *uncertainty*, WYOFIL (April 22, 2025), available at: <https://wyofile.com/report-wildlife-refuge-system-at-risk-with-no-units-fully-resourced-amid-doge-uncertainty/>

25 <sup>3</sup> Rachel Frazin, *Trump administration eyes 30 percent payroll reduction at National Park Service*, THE HILL (March



22. The National Park Service is directed to protect and preserve crown jewel public lands for the use and enjoyment of the general public. This is an agency that already is understaffed and, in the past, inadequate levels of staffing at the National Park Service have impaired its operations. For example, during the 2018-2019 government shutdown, I am aware of the poaching of elk in Zion National Park due to the lack of enforcement employees at the park. Projected cuts to the National Park Service will create more vacuums for wildlife poaching to occur. And this will directly harm the WWP's mission to protect and restore native wildlife, and it will also result in harms to WWP members like me.

#### **The Proposed Staffing Cuts at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Directly Hurt WWP's Ability to Carry Out its Mission**

23. NOAA is preparing to terminate more than 1,000 as part of a mandated RIF after losing about 2,000 staff members since January, according to media reports.<sup>4</sup> The National Weather Service is preparing for degraded operations because of severe shortages and staffing cuts.<sup>5</sup>

24. WWP relies on drought data collected and curated by the National Weather Service, which is a part of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ("NOAA"), to support our work in connection with livestock grazing on federal lands. In particular, WWP has long advocated for federal agencies to reduce livestock levels in response to drought, recommending the use of the Drought Monitor, an asset maintained by NOAA. We regularly use this comprehensive public information source to inform our analysis of areas

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10, 2025), available at: <https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/5186981-trump-administration-national-park-service-cuts/>; Adam Roy, *National Parks Face More Cuts as NPS Considers 30% Payroll Reduction*, BACKPACKER MAGAZINE (March 12, 2025), available at: <https://www.backpacker.com/news-and-events/news/national-parks-30-percent-payroll-reduction/>

<sup>4</sup> Selina Wang and Kelly Livingston, *NOAA braces for mass layoffs, fueling concerns about lifesaving weather services*, ABC NEWS (March 12, 2025), available at: <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/noaa-braces-mass-layoffs-fueling-concerns-lifesaving-weather/story?id=119730398>

<sup>5</sup> Lisa Friedman, *Weather Service Prepares for 'Degraded Operations' Amid Trump Cuts*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (April 16, 2025), available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/16/climate/national-weather-service-forecast-doge-trump.html>

1 that are now affected, or are predicted to be affected by drought, and use that analysis to  
2 support our lobbying efforts with Congress and federal agencies to promote  
3 environmentally protective policies around grazing. The agency's Drought Index and  
4 related tools are essential to our work, and there is no comparable public source of  
5 nationwide drought information. We are concerned that job losses within NOAA will  
6 interrupt the availability of the Drought Monitor data and thereby impair our efforts to  
7 persuade agencies to respond effectively to drought to prevent deterioration of federal  
8 public lands.

9 25. Similarly, NOAA also produces a number of reports on climate change, an issue that  
10 WWP raises frequently to highlight the cumulative effects of livestock grazing, oil and gas  
11 development, and other permitted uses on federal lands. For example, climate change is at  
12 the heart of WWP's legal challenge to the 2015 West-wide sage grouse plans. WWP was a  
13 plaintiff in litigation regarding these sage grouse plans, in which the plaintiffs argued that  
14 the BLM had failed to complete an adequate cumulative impacts analysis, including the  
15 cumulative impacts of climate change on sage grouse and their habitats. WWP, together  
16 with other plaintiffs, won a preliminary injunction blocking the first Trump  
17 administration's gutting of sage grouse protections in 2019. *See generally Western*  
18 *Watersheds Project et al. v. Bernhardt*, D. Idaho Case No. 1:16-cv-00083-BLW (Winmill,  
19 J.). We rely regularly on NOAA's climate information to perform the analysis necessary  
20 for cases like that one.

21 26. WWP also regularly relies on the National Marine Fisheries Service ("NMFS"), another  
22 component agency of NOAA, on conservation of anadromous fishes. NMFS oversees the  
23 listing and recovery of marine species under the Endangered Species Act, including  
24 salmon runs on the Columbia and Snake Rivers and coho and chinook salmon runs in Point  
25 Reyes National Seashore. WWP has advocated strongly for dam removal on the Snake and  
Columbia in the context of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' dam operations plan, and

lobbied Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho) to seek removal of these dams (which he did seek to do), to promote the recovery of those salmon runs. We also advocated for removal of livestock from Point Reyes National Seashore, which is managed by the National Park Service (“NPS”), in part to restore spawning habitats for ESA-listed salmon and steelhead, and litigated the NPS plan for Point Reyes, which resulted in a settlement ending several cattle operations in the area. The loss of so many employees from NOAA will impair the agency’s ability to list and recover anadromous salmon and steelhead populations, undermining our successful conservation work with these species. Further, those staffing reductions will impair our ability to work with NMFS on the recovery of marine species (anadromous fishes in particular), to the detriment of WWP’s mission to protect and restore them.

27. Overall, the loss of such a large percentage of NOAA’s workforce will inevitably impair NOAA’s ability to provide the public data that WWP relies on for so much of its mission-critical work.

#### **The Proposed Staffing Cuts at the United States Department of Agriculture Directly Hurt WWP’s Ability to Carry Out its Mission**

28. USDA is gutting its headquarters in Washington, D.C., and laying off thousands of workers, according to news reports.<sup>6</sup>

29. The U.S. Forest Service, which is part of the USDA, is charged with managing commercial livestock grazing that is permitted across tens of millions of acres of national forest lands. Even at full staffing levels, the agency has been unable to prevent livestock grazing that has caused chronic and serious degradation of streamside habitats of rare and imperiled fish species ranging from the arctic grayling to chinook salmon to steelhead and bull trout.

<sup>6</sup> Eric Katz, *White House pitches layoffs, local office closures and program eliminations at USDA*, GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE (April 15, 2025), available at: <https://www.govexec.com/management/2025/04/white-house-pitches-layoffs-local-office-closures-and-program-eliminations-usda/404580/>

1 The loss of more federal employees engaged in the oversight of livestock grazing will  
2 inevitably result in increased livestock damage to riparian habitats and spawning streams  
3 critical to the survival of these sensitive species. That will harm Western Watersheds  
4 Project's mission.

5 30. WWP holds a state grazing lease on Champion Creek, which is embedded within the  
6 Sawtooth Valley National Recreation Area ("SNRA") near Stanley, Idaho. The SNRA is  
7 administered by the U.S. Forest Service.

8 31. WWP acquired this grazing lease as part of our mission to preserve and restore land from  
9 overgrazing that had badly damaged riparian habitats. Even over the short span of three  
10 growing seasons, our recovery efforts have substantially restored this riparian habitat,  
11 providing high quality habitat for numerous species, including salmon and steelhead  
12 spawning habitat. This highly effective conservation work is threatened by the termination  
13 of Forest Service employees in the SNRA, which is likely to result in a lack of Forest  
14 Service oversight of cattle grazing on Forest Service lands upstream.

15 32. Our Operations Director, who is based in Hailey, Idaho, reported to me on March 3, 2025  
16 that due to previous terminations of the Forest Service probationary employees who run  
17 the SNRA, the SNRA's Stanley office has been closed except two days a week for 5 hours  
18 each day, and the main SNRA office staff for the Ketchum office has dwindled to the point  
19 where the office is only open three days a week. The federal employee in charge of  
20 regulating development on lands where conservation easements apply in the SNRA also  
21 was fired, and is now working for the City of Ketchum, so today there is no compliance  
22 check on the terms and conditions of conservation easements in SNRA. WWP has a heavy  
23 concentration of members in Hailey and Ketchum, Idaho adjacent to the SNRA, whose  
24 recreational experiences will be harmed by the closure of visitor centers and the lack of  
25 oversight over livestock grazing and conservation easement compliance.

1 33. If these large-scale RIFs are implemented, those reductions in Forest Service staff will  
2 necessarily result in poorer oversight of livestock grazing on Forest Service lands,  
3 impairing salmon and steelhead spawning habitats in Champion Creek that we are actively  
4 leasing lands to protect, and undermining WWP's painstaking work of the past three  
5 decades. When cattle graze excessively in riparian (streamside) habitats, where they tend to  
6 congregate under lax management and oversight, they denude streamside vegetation and  
7 cause erosion and siltation from the streambanks, which smothers salmon and steelhead  
8 spawning gravels, depriving the eggs of the oxygen they require to hatch.

9 **The Proposed Staffing Cuts at the National Science Foundation Directly Hurt WWP's**  
10 **Ability to Carry Out its Mission**

11 34. Similarly, WWP regularly uses research funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF)  
12 to advocate for protection and restoration of wildlife and public lands. This includes: NSF-  
13 funded Mexican wolf genetics research, which WWP has repeatedly cited in our efforts to  
14 advance Mexican wolf recovery; NSF-funded research on the evolution of horses in North  
15 America, which WWP has used in our advocacy for ecologically sustainable management  
16 of wild horse populations; and NSF-funded research into the effectiveness of native  
17 carnivores in reducing Chronic Wasting Disease in deer and elk populations, which WWP  
18 has cited repeatedly in our advocacy in favor of restoration of native carnivores like wolves  
19 and mountain lions, to name a few.

20 35. Like other federal agencies, NSF is undergoing mass layoffs as a result of budgetary  
21 restrictions and cuts pushed by the Trump Administration, which may reduce the NSF  
22 workforce by 50 percent.<sup>7</sup>

23 <sup>7</sup> Brian Buntz, *NSF Layoffs in 2025: Deep budget cuts headed for U.S. research sector*, R & D WORLD (April 10,  
24 2025), available at: <https://www.rdworldonline.com/nsf-layoffs-in-2025-deep-budget-cuts-headed-for-u-s-research-sector/#:~:text=According%20to%20internal%20communications%20in,over%20the%20next%20several%20months.>

1 36. WWP relies heavily on science to advocate for protection and restoration of wildlife and  
2 native ecosystems, and each study is unique and irreplaceable. WWP cites scientific  
3 studies in our Endangered Species listing petitions (based entirely on science), in our  
4 comments on environmental reviews for federal land-use plans, industrial projects, and  
5 grazing permit assessments, in public advocacy presentations, and myriad other efforts.

6 37. The termination of many program officers at NSF is likely to lead to the interruption or  
7 cancellation of scientific studies such as these, and will deprive WWP of the scientific  
8 knowledge needed to advocate for improved conservation efforts by federal and state  
9 agencies.

#### 10 **RIFs will Harm WWP's Members**

11 38. Our members are regular and avid users of the public lands in the Western United States.  
12 They use the National Parks, wilderness areas, and other federal lands for recreation,  
13 conservation, and study activities. They would be adversely affected by the degradation of  
14 public lands and the worsening threats to species that are likely to result from the  
15 reductions of staffing at the Fish & Wildlife Service and other federal agencies that will  
16 delay ESA listing decisions.

17 39. For example, I myself am an avid hiker and camper, and am the author of the books Hiking  
18 the North Cascades and Best Easy Day Hikes North Cascades, in northwestern  
19 Washington. On April 21, 2025, I learned of the firing of a wilderness ranger who had  
20 worked on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (OWNF, covering both the Pasayten  
21 and Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wildernesses features in my books). As a result of previous  
22 terminations of probationary employees, many wilderness rangers have left Forest Service  
23 employment permanently, leaving only one wilderness ranger in the Methow Ranger  
24 District, which covers the Pasayten and Lake Chelan-Sawtooth. The departure of these  
25 rangers makes these areas more dangerous for hikers and backpackers. In addition, the

1 former ranger informed me that the loss of many “red-carded” Forest Service employees  
2 authorized to participate in fire-suppression activities and logistical support will reduce the  
3 agency’s ability to extinguish human-caused fires, which can be damaging to the  
4 ecosystem. Ordinarily 12 wilderness rangers work on the six Ranger Districts on the  
5 OWNF, and today only three do. Any further RIFs will further decimate the number of  
6 rangers, making backcountry areas such as this more dangerous when members of my  
7 organization visit them.

8 40. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing is  
9 true and correct. Executed this 25th day of April, 2025.

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12 Erik Molvar  
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